

TRIBUTE TO PETE BALLARD

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Pete Ballard, a dear friend and a truly remarkable West Virginian who is known throughout the Mountain State and far past our borders for his many talents, especially for his global recognition of his still life paintings and historic period doll creations.

A native of Welch, located in the southern-most part of our State in McDowell County, Pete currently resides in Peterstown, an idyllic small town in the rolling emerald hills of Monroe County. Although Pete's career in the arts has taken him across the country and around the world, including Saudi Arabia, China and Vietnam, there has never been a doubt that Pete's roots are truly imbedded in West Virginia.

After receiving a degree in education from Concord University, Pete began teaching. However, it wasn't long before Pete's propensities steered him far beyond just a career in education, leading him to partake in many more professional ventures.

Today, as an award-winning educator, celebrated artist, renowned painter, nationally acclaimed costume designer, curator, historian, and famous doll creator, Pete's passion for the arts and creativity know no bounds.

Many of Pete's paintings are now displayed in museums and art galleries across the country. Today, three of Pete's exceptional paintings are displayed among the most celebrated collection of American Still Life paintings at The Butler Institute, which is America's first museum to collect American art. His work will forever be a part of such an extraordinary collection of America's best artwork.

In addition to his distinguished paintings, Pete has most recently been recognized across the country for his unique creation of 19th century fashion dolls. Pete creates each doll based on meticulously researched and authentic period fashion. Made from head to toe in papier-mâché, the dolls' figures range from approximately 3 to 5 feet tall and wear costumes that are designed in period clothing.

Due to Pete's painstaking attention to detail along with his fashion expertise, hard work and brilliant vision, he is no stranger to receiving prestigious awards. As Governor, I was honored to name Pete as a Distinguished West Virginian. He has also received the Grand Groundhog Watcher Award. Both of these awards were created to honor those who have contributed significantly to West Virginia and those who have brought positive attention to our great State. He was also named Concord University's Golden Alumnus, is among the Outstanding Educators in America, and has received the Order of the Arts and Historical Letters from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. Pete's paintings and dolls have also been displayed in galas and exhibitions around West Virginia and across the country.

Despite his astounding success, Pete has never collected a dime for his work. After spending 12 hours a day, 7 days a week working on each piece of art, he merely donates every painting and every doll he doesn't hold for keepsake to charity or to art galleries.

It has been an honor and privilege to know such a gifted West Virginian. Pete Ballard's imprint will always be marked by his brilliant creations and his countless contributions to the State of West Virginia. I join all West Virginians in celebrating his vast achievements, which will live on in our history books, atop the same shelves as some of the most distinguished artwork of our time and mounted on the walls of esteemed museums.

After all these years, I continue to look forward to viewing many more paintings and doll creations because at the age of 83, Pete continues to work on his art every day.●

TRIBUTE TO PHYLLIS RHODES

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to thank Phyllis Rhodes for her outstanding service to the Municipality of Anchorage, the Federal court system, and Identity, Inc. on the occasion of her retirement.

Born in Arizona and raised in Texas, Phyllis and her former husband moved to Alaska in 1967 with their young daughter Anne, making their home in Anchorage. A second daughter, Emily, made her appearance after the family relocated to Alaska. Since her arrival in Alaska Phyllis' contributions to the cause of equality for the LGBTQ community, and all Alaskans, has become legendary.

Phyllis started out as the volunteer coordinator for Identity, Inc. but with her usual passion and commitment, she started picking up speed, eventually becoming the unpaid executive director of the organization. Over the course of her 10 years as executive director of Identity, Inc. Phyllis has taken the organization from obscurity to high visibility in Anchorage and across Alaska. During Phyllis' tenure, Identity, Inc. expanded its programs and began outreach to new audiences. The creation of an advocacy team has led to open dialogues with Alaska businesses, churches, educational institutions and other organizations. Within the LGBTQ community, Phyllis is the recognized heart and soul of Identity, Inc.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Phyllis for her many years of advocating for equality. I wish the absolute best to her, her wife Pam, and her daughters Anne and Emily, as they begin this next stage in their lives.●

REMEMBERING COLONEL OLA LEE MIZE

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the passing of a great Alabamian, COL Ola Lee Mize, on March 12, 2014. Colonel Mize was a native of Marshall

County and an American hero. He embodied the ideals of service and courage that make our State proud.

Colonel Mize was born on August 28, 1931, in Marshall County, and dropped out of high school after ninth grade to provide for his family. He was rejected for enlistment by the Army numerous times because he was blind in one eye and they claimed he was too small. Eventually he was accepted and joined the 82nd Airborne Division.

He is perhaps best remembered by his defense of Outpost Harry when it was attacked during the Korean war. Colonel Mize bravely protected injured comrades and held opposition forces at bay, valiantly risking his life for others. For this intrepid gallantry, Colonel Mize earned a Medal of Honor, which remains on display in the Guntersville Museum.

Colonel Mize went on to join the Special Forces and served 3½ tours in Vietnam with the Green Berets and then served as an Active-Duty advisor to National Guard Special Forces units. Throughout the course of his military career, he was awarded the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and, of course, the Medal of Honor. Colonel Mize continued to be active in veterans' events and where he was known and honored by all. He retired in 1981 after 31 years of service.

Mary and I mourn his passing and send our condolences to his wife Betty, his daughter Teresa Peterson, and his six brothers and sisters. Alabama has lost a true hero and his legend will grow. I was honored to get to know him. He was a remarkable man whose courage on the battlefield extended to a determination to do the right thing in all aspects of life.●

REMEMBERING JOHN RICHARD MILLER, JR.

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the passing of a great Alabamian, John Richard Miller, Jr., who died on January 26, 1024. Mr. Miller was a native and longtime resident of Brewton, AL.

After graduating from Culver Military Academy in Culver, IN, he attended the University of Alabama. Mr. Miller served as a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 8th Air Force, in the European Theatre of Operation during World War II, receiving the Air Medal, E.T.O. Medal, and a Presidential Citation, and was discharged with the rank of major.

After his military service, he returned to Brewton where, like his father and grandfather, was employed by T.R. Miller Mill Company where he held various positions including chairman of the board from 1986 to 2009, and chairman emeritus until his death. He also served on many other boards and was a founding member of the Bank of Mobile. He was the third generation patriarch of this family and its businesses. He was also very committed to